



**U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Texas**

**Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TWO SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON ON FIREARMS TRAFFICKING CHARGES**

**United States Attorney Johnny Sutton** announced that in El Paso, 33-year-old Jonatan Lopez-Gutierrez, a Mexican National, and 32-year-old John Avelar of El Paso were each sentenced to 48 months and 37 months in federal prison, respectively, on federal weapons trafficking charges.

In addition, United States District Judge David Briones ordered that both defendants be placed under supervised release for a period of three years after completing their prison terms. Judge Briones also ordered that Avelar perform 100 hours of community service after completing his prison term.

On September 9, 2008, the defendants pleaded guilty to one count each of conspiracy to provide false statements during the purchase of firearms and conspiracy to smuggle goods from the United States.

By pleading guilty, the defendants admitted to participating in a straw purchasing scheme from May 2007 until March 2008 to purchase over 98 firearms from licensed dealers in El Paso then smuggle them into the Republic of Mexico for buyers who could not legally purchase firearms in the United States. The straw-purchased and smuggled firearms included a various assortment of pistols and rifles—including one .50 caliber rifle.

This case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives together with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the El Paso Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Greg McDonald prosecuted this case on behalf of the Government.

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